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the learner will soon acknowledge that the desirable result is unattainable by any other means. In his earliest essays in crayon, the student generally relies too much upon the finger, and works down his tints to tameness and insipidity; whereas, with some observation and a little experience, the power of the finger is such as, with a few touches, to blend and harmonize the tints into a fresh and life-like imitation of the model. But this supposes the exercise of care and judgment.

In coloring, the principal difficulty is, of course, the rubbing in of the proper tints in the proper places, with the power of representing, by blending or superposition, any tint that may not be found in the crayons. These complex tints are of continual occurrence in every set of features that may come under our notice.

Having laid in the tints according to the natural complexion, and in their strictly relative gradations, it will be necessary, before touching the work with the finger, to be certain that all are laid in the proper places, and all as nearly as possible respectively disposed in their proper degrees. If this be the case—and a little experience will enable the learner to judge of it—there remains but little work for the finger to perform; and the less the colors are worked upon, the more fresh and transparent they will remain.

But if tints of remote degrees be placed in juxtaposition, the tint resulting from these is not only at once false, but the labor of the learner becomes increased fivefold, if it be not at once necessary to remove the whole of the color.

The skilful pastel artist does not abuse the power which the use of the finger gives; he knows exactly the utmost force of the crayon, and does not, accordingly, destroy its best quality. In works of art, it is more difficult to learn where to stop than how to begin. If the tints be properly selected, the office of the finger is only to reconcile the colors, and give breadth to the whole by removing any distinctions of tone that may appear.

The errors into which a learner may fall arise from the constant and indiscriminate use of the finger. The results of this are as already stated—the enfeebling of the drawing, the loss of outline, and the reduction of the tints to flatness and opacity. The student is also liable to dwell upon detail, and to neglect the breadths—a practice that produces defects the more embarrassing, as they cannot easily be remedied.

The shade of flesh tints is warm or cold according to the warmth or coldness of the breadths of the light. If the lights be of a healthy hue, the shades may be warm, inclining to brown, mixed with various colors, broken with light red, carmine, yellow, and blue or gray. Some artists represent nature as violet or green in shade, but this is untrue and must be guarded against.

It is advisable generally to follow the Italian feeling, of leaving the dark passages warm. When the complexion is strong in color, the effect of this is most agreeable, if worked without hardness, opacity, or blackness. The deepest shades even should be relieved by a certain transparency, obtainable by half-tints. Without such relief, they will always be expressionless and heavy.

In feminine portraits or studies, the work must be brought up to the utmost brilliancy of color by the brightest and freshest hues, composed of white, Naples yellow, vermilion, and madder, mellowed with yellows, or slightly empurpled with lake or carmine, according to the prevalent tint of the subject.

In the masculine subjects the colors will be stronger and the half-tints more positive.

Great care must be observed, lest the high and delicate passages be soiled or stained. They must only be approached by and blended with other shades at their extremities; and these shades are, in most cases, half-tints.

Some pastel artists adopt the practice of mixing their tints upon the paper itself; but if the uncertainty of this method were the only objection to it, that were sufficient to condemn it. This is done, especially in life-sized heads, by breaking and mixing the crayons, perhaps on the cheek, and then harmonizing the tints so produced by rubbing and softening; but it is an unnecessarily laborious process, likely to produce a spottiness very difficult to correct.

Those half-tints, or warm or cold grays, which are employed as intermediates to meet and reconcile tones of remoter degrees, must be qualified with the colors with which they are associated, otherwise they will not harmonize. But as this will at once be felt by the merest tyro, and the remedy suggests itself, no special instruction on this point is necessary. It will be obvious that, if the intermediate tint be too cold, it must be treated with the reds or yellows; if too warm, reduced by gray or blue. The lights and shades should be carefully graduated, till harmony prevails throughout the work. The student must not expect to realize this at once—it can only be accomplished by experience.

The draperies, dress, and accessories must be treated with greater freedom and decision than can be used in the features; and this larger manner will, in contrast with the delicate drawing of the features, serve to give value to the latter.

For backgrounds there is no arbitrary rule; a head may be relieved by a light background or by a dark background, and with good effect by either, although with the latter it would be much more forcible than with the former. But a dark background is not always suitable, especially for feminine portraiture.

Backgrounds are not to be rubbed in mechanically, with the persuasion that any dark will relieve any light, or that any middle tint that may be cut by shade will suffice. It will be understood, as a general rule, that the background immediately round the head should be lower in tone than the half-tints of the face, and lighter than the shades, to give air and space—to disengage the head.

A perfectly flat and unbroken tint may be employed for the relief of a portrait with the best effect; but, in general practice, this is to be avoided by the student, for whom the safest method will be to relieve his heads by a background so broken up as to throw off, with various degrees of force, the parts opposed to it. We speak only of portions placed in opposition, because in dark backgrounds, very often, the tone is reduced even to the depth of the hair.

It frequently occurs that in passing repeatedly over certain parts of the work, the paper becomes glazed, or greasy, under the frequent application of the pastel, and thus refuses to receive the color. In this case, in order to restore a practicable surface, it will be necessary to rub it gently with pumice pounce, very fine glass-paper, or, what is still better, with cuttlefish.

This glazing of the surface is generally attended by another inconvenience, arising from the too vigorous application of the finger or the pastel—that is, the distension and loosening of the fibre of the paper, for which, if there were no remedy, it would be necessary to abandon the drawing. The distension of the paper may be reduced and its firmness restored by wetting it behind with water in which a little alum has been dissolved.

It will be seen that very much will depend upon the intelligence of the student, who may at once catch the spirit of these observations, or may achieve success by perseverance. There are many things difficult of explanation, but very easy of exemplification in practice. It is, therefore, to practice and the experience that results from it that the student must have recourse for the acquisition of a knowledge of many details which application will readily teach.

In some departments of art, written precepts read smoothly, and induce a confidence which a little experience quickly destroys; but in crayon painting, on the contrary, a little experience will confirm and augment any degree of confidence which a student desiring to acquire the practice of crayon painting may have gathered from these directions.

PERISHABILITY OF ARTISTS' PIGMENTS.

An Antwerp chemist, M. Blockx, has lately published the results of his investigations into the perishability of pigments. The following summary of what he says is translated from "Le Moniteur des Arts:"

Why do modern pictures deteriorate so quickly? why do they peel off and so soon lose their freshness? To these questions M. Brockx replies: On account of—

The employment of oils of inferior quality, which darken.

The use of drying oils and of varnish, which cause the painting to crack.

The abuse of turpentine, which takes the brilliancy out of the color, and kills the tone.

The employment of badly prepared colors, or of those whose fixity is not perfect, such as vermilions, chromes, and certain lakes.

The bad preparation of canvases and panels.

The defective manner of applying colors.

The too hasty varnishing of pictures.

We need not enter into a detailed examination of these various statements, justified as they are by constant experience. All artists will tell you that their colors are no longer prepared with the care of former times, that their canvases and panels are often coated with corruptible materials; and this decided a great number—Henner, Roybet, Meissonier, for example—to prepare them themselves. We prefer to dwell on the chemical portion of the treatise, that in which M. Blockx passes all the colors in review and explains what the artist ought to expect from their use.

M. Blockx first eliminates as unfit for painting:

Blanc de neige, Chinese white, cochineal carmine, carmine lakes and burnt madder; the chrome, Indian, zinc, and antimony yellow; woad lake, yellow lake, raw sienna, terre verte, green ochre, Paris greens, Scheele's or emerald greens, Schweinfurt greens, green cinnabar, green lakes, malachite green, and cobalt; mineral and Prussian blues, violet lakes, umber, bitumen, mummy, and ivory brown.

It is evident that M. Blockx hits hard and that he takes many resources from the palette of some painters. But on looking into the matter a little more closely it will be seen that, except the lakes, raw sienna, Indian yellow, and Prussian blue, essential colors do not figure in this table of exclusion, and that all the prohibited materials can easily be replaced by the mixture of fixed colors giving similar colorings. If artists listened to his advice, they would be led to a practical reform, the excellence of which has been indicated by the old masters; namely, the simplification of their palette. The portraits of these masters to be seen in the museums, and all that one knows of their methods, show them to us actually seeking their combinations with black, white, ochre, vermilion, and blue, like Rembrandt and Velasquez (to quote only these), and finding even in this simplicity of materials the means of enhancing the character of their impressions. In these days one rather loses sight of all this. Artists encumber their palettes with a number of colors which give them the requisite tones ready made. So much the worse for them, and if it is necessary to make any exception, it can only be in favor of painters of flowers, a class of subjects demanding special primary material, employed perhaps—M. Blockx would say, surely—to the detriment of duration.

The question of oils has also much engrossed M. Blockx. Oil being an element in the darkening of painting, he has sought to replace it, and has ended by substituting for it amber dissolved by a new process. A writer in our London contemporary, The Artist, commenting on M. Blockx's list, remarks:

"The one great failing of the very few who have given attention to the study of pigments is the attempt on each one's part to say definitely this pigment should be used and that should not; the result of such division into permanent and non-permanent classes is that there is no uniformity among the writers who have studied the subject. Thus in M. Blockx's list of useless pigments we find Chinese white (the oxide of zinc); the only reason we can conceive for this is that in oil painting this white is not so easily manipulated, and does not dry so rapidly (unless a siccative, which usually turns brown, be added to it) as the unstable white-lead compounds. In every other respect, especially for water-color painting, it is the most perfect white yet obtained. As regards the lakes, we admit the fugitive nature of most cochineal lakes; cochineal carmine, however, is the most permanent of them all, although it cannot be looked upon as absolutely durable. Raw sienna also should certainly not be classed among the 'unfit' pigments; it is only where its ferruginous nature comes in contact with chemical elements unfavorable to iron that its use should be avoided, for otherwise it is but little changed by light, time, or foul air. Terre verte, when obtained free from earths containing copper, is certainly very durable, and unaffected by, and unaffecting, other colors when in combination with them. With the remainder of the list we do not disagree. Far more good, however, would be done by stating the qualities and the actions various pigments assume toward each other, than in endeavoring to construct tables of so-called 'permanent' and 'non-permanent' colors; for then the artist would know under what conditions it would be safe, and what unsafe, to use a certain pigment."